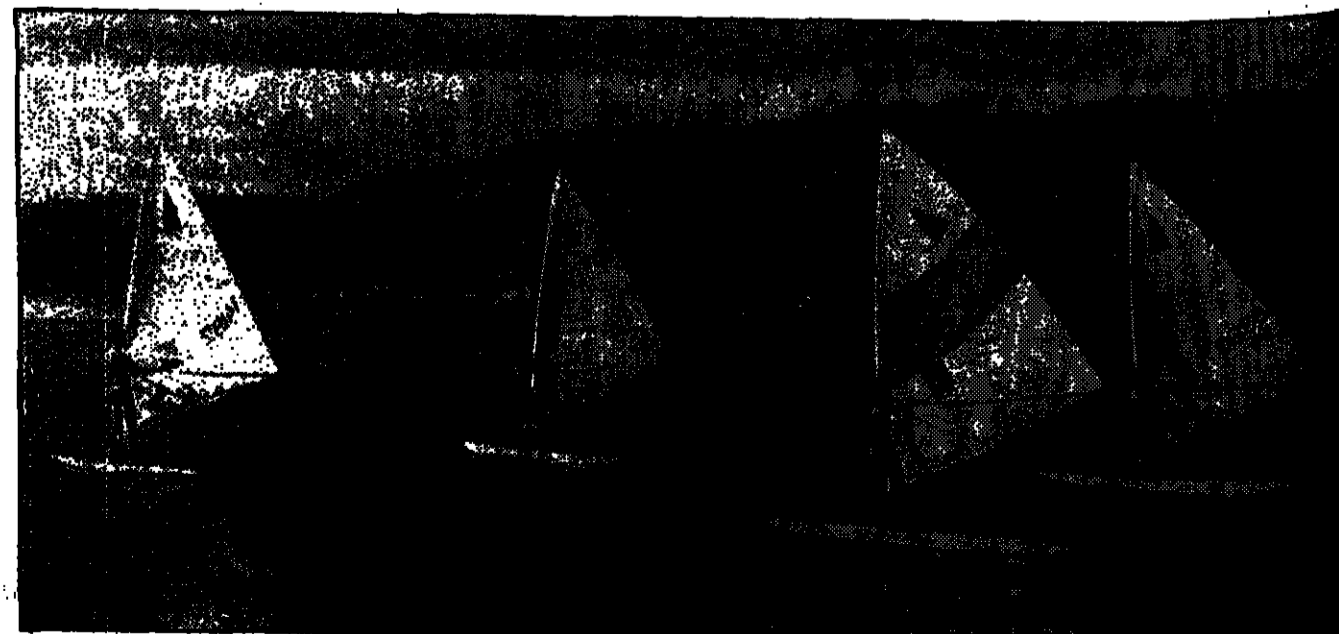


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A WEEKLY REVIEW OF THE GERMAN PRESS

Hamburg, 13 March 1977
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Pressure over human rights must be maintained at talks

What has become of Helsinki? Only the Follow-up Conference in Belgrade in the summer and autumn will tell. The conference, which will be attended by the 33 European and the two North American signatories of the Helsinki Final Act, is intended to review the implementation of that Act.

Officials of the 35 governments will meet in June in order to set the date, agenda and duration as well as the level at which the review of the Act is to take place.

It would be fallacious to underestimate procedural questions, for such talks frequently chart the course of the conference itself.

At the Ambassadors' meeting in Helsinki in the winter of 1972/73, for instance, the actual drawing-up of an agenda made it possible for the Foreign Ministers to discuss human rights at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The forthcoming preparatory meeting in Belgrade will now have to serve as a fixative for the arrangements of Helsinki because the agenda will include all aspects of the Final Act.

It has now turned out that the Soviet Union miscalculated as regards the CSCE. Moscow had pursued this project within the framework of its European policy for well over 20 years — albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm — hoping to unseat America from its do-

minant position in Europe and to take its place. But by including the human rights issue the West forced the Soviet Union to take constant active steps on the humanitarian front — steps which can rightly be demanded from the Kremlin both from within and without.

While the one is something entirely static, the other is highly dynamic and keeps crying out for fulfilment. It is certain that the dissident unrest in virtually all East European countries has not been actively coordinated. Any coordination there might appear to be arises from the fact that the scheduled Belgrade meeting is drawing closer.

This should induce the participants in the forthcoming conference not to part without having scheduled the next follow-up conference and to insist that the report of the Review Commission be made public in all nations concerned, as was the Helsinki Act.

The Soviet Union expects the brunt of Western criticism to revolve around the human rights issue. Its preparations to meet this criticism are — if the Communist press is anything to go by — of an ambivalent nature.

On the one hand, there is the defensive attempt to devalue human rights in general, as for instance by the argument that human rights are not rights in themselves, but products of the bourgeois society and that the true implementation of human rights lies above all in the class struggle.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union is trying to turn the tables and to enlarge upon the list of human rights. The West, it says, violates social human rights by tolerating unemployment, high rents, meagre educational opportunities, exploitation of foreign workers and by barring people from a civil service career on the grounds of their political convictions.

It is unlikely that the Soviet Union expects such charges to be very effective. Its main concern would seem to



Kohl re-elected CDU chairman

Christian Democratic Union chairman Helmut Kohl, left, was re-elected to this post by 767 delegates of the 810 attending the 25th Party Conference in Düsseldorf. With him, from left to right, are Werner Dollinger, representing CSU chairman Franz Josef Strauss, Kurt Biedenkopf, who is relinquishing the post of CDU secretary general and former West German Chancellor, Ludwig Erhard.

(Photo: dpa)

that the human rights issue could "diver-credit socialism".

How much muscle should the West show in Belgrade? Like Soviet politicians, Willy Brandt, too, warned against turning Belgrade into a tribunal. But, knowing our West European governments as we do, this is hardly a danger we need worry about.

The arrest of the Soviet dissident Anatolij outside the Elysee Palace shows that the mistakes West European governments might make were attributable more to cautiousness than to fervour.

Perhaps we should look at the whole thing from another angle. Helsinki turned out to be a success for the West, and this is reason enough to continue on that course. The lot of dissidents and citizens of Communist states in general can only be improved if pressure on the Soviet Union is kept up. And to achieve this Western governments must be pressured by the public into exerting pressure.

But of course there are limits which should not be overstepped. If the Soviet Union were to decide to throw in its

cards in a game that is not going well for it at all and if it were to leave the CSCE, the West would be deprived of an important instrument in helping the people of Eastern Europe.

But on other hand the West must not allow itself to be bluffed. It is unlikely that Moscow will find it easy to simply tear up the Helsinki document. After all, there is too much prestige and too much hope of making progress some day at stake.

And Moscow has a vested interest in not discrediting Eurocommunism before the electorate. As a result, any pressure exerted in Belgrade would have to be exerted in careful doses.

The actual danger is not that the Soviet Union might abandon the Helsinki Final Act, but that it might try to water down the human rights aspect or perhaps even to abolish it altogether, or to divert attention from it by raising other issues. This is where the West will have to remain on guard.

Günther Gillesen

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 1 March 1977)

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Kassel's wallpaper museum mounts a special exhibition

inant position in Europe and to take its place.

But the whole thing now seems to have turned into an embarrassment for Moscow. Helsinki cost more in concessions than it was worth.

This is partly due to the fact that, having after a long tug-of-war succeeded in including "the inviolability of borders" (reserving the right of peaceful changes) in the Final Act, the Soviet Union demanded merely an omission from the West, namely the changing of

West's support for dissidents leads to dilemma

which they are the guardians. Not only are they caught in a conflict between interests and principles, but they also lack the power to implement their ideas everywhere.

As Willy Brandt said, compassion demands that we publicly show sympathy for those who have made personal sacrifices to uphold the principles for which we stand. This compassion also demands that we lend them support to

the fullest possible extent. But there we are, faced with the thin borderline between a feasible policy and a political campaign.

No Western government must permit itself to arouse false hopes of outside help in the dissidents. And no Western government can increase its pressure on Moscow to such an extent as to create an atmosphere that would induce the Kremlin to turn the screw even further.

Neither President Carter nor Chancellor Schmidt can go beyond the point at which Brezhnev will consider himself compelled to choose between defiance (which he still wants) and full control over his realm.

There are indications that the West has come pretty close to this point. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4 March 1977)

TECHNOLOGY

Fire-damp explosions that help to make mining safer

In the disused coal mines 350 metres under Dortmund, engineers, technicians, physicists and miners have been artificially setting off fire-damp explosions for experimental purposes for exactly fifty years.

For the uninitiated it is a horrifying sight when a flame suddenly flares up, runs along the roof of the gallery and sets off a series of explosions on coming in contact with coal dust before finally burning out after one last bang.

For the experts who have seen it perhaps a thousand times it is a matter of routine. And this is after all a mini-explosion compared with the real thing which shoots round faster than the eye can follow, blasting everything — men, machines, pit-props to smithereens.

The methane gas that explodes in these experiments is released into the gallery from gas cylinders — only a few cubic feet of it at a time. Normally, however, it seeps out of coal seams in mines.

Experiments in the Dortmund mines were first carried out for research purposes only. But lately mining experts from all over the country and other European states have been coming specially to learn more about fire-damp explosions.

This is the only "laboratory" mine of its kind in the world. It has six kilometre-long galleries and two shafts.



During research work experts realised what causes fire-damp explosions even when the air methane-content is well below the danger level of five to fifteen per cent.

Methane is lighter than air and if it escapes from coal at the sides of in the roof of a gallery, instead of mixing with the air it becomes concentrated in the roof. Naturally methane counts taken lower down in the gallery do not register a dangerous level.

One particularly disastrous fire-damp explosion occurred in the "Minister Stein" mine in 1925. Altogether 126 miners were killed and this prompted the Reichstag to turn the "Tremonia" mine over to research teams for experimental purposes in 1927.

In the fifty years since then, this mine has more than proved its worth. The stone dust barrier safety technique that was developed there is now being introduced into mines all over the world. By this method stone dust is churned up by the explosion and stifles the flame.

The water trough barrier was also developed in the Tremonia mine. This extinguished the flame when the detonation released water in the troughs.

The best, most recently developed security measure, is a "paste" which is sprayed over sides and roof of galleries.

It binds coal dust — which is the real fuel for a fire-damp explosion after the initial detonation — and keeps it damp. This hygroscopic mass of potassium and magnesium which absorbs moisture makes a major explosion more or less impossible.

This paste is used in all coal mines in the Federal Republic, and almost certainly has a lot to do with the fact that no major disaster has occurred through fire-damp explosions in the past twelve years.

Formerly they used to happen with frightening regularity. The last mining disaster was in the "Luise" mine in the Saar which has the highest gas count of any coal mine in this country and is therefore most prone to fire- and explosions. That time 299 men were killed.

But mining experts are not content to rest on their laurels yet and they are continuing their research work. The conditions under which such explosions happen are often unpredictable and the course they take downright capricious.

Even getting a fire-damp explosion started artificially can pose problems. Sometimes it just does not happen. "But if it were different there would not be any coal miners any more," says mine director Kurt Reinke.

Even a primary detonation can only be triggered off when a lot of short-fuse fumes are under the roof of the gallery and if the right concentration of methane is present — that is five to fifteen per cent.

The primary detonation has to mix the methane with the air so as to ignite other layers of methane.

Before coal dust ignites and the main explosion occurs, there has to be at least one hundred grammes of coal dust per cubic metre of air, containing 25 to 30 per cent volatile matter.

It is difficult to safeguard mines against fire-damp explosions because they can go off in so many different ways. Either they happen too quickly and are already past the water trough barriers when they release their water. Or else they go off too slowly and gently to trigger off the barriers.

Sometimes the explosion runs out in irregular circles and spirals rather than in one broad front across the gallery and so avoids, the the water trough

So an automatic electronic barrier has been invented. It distinguishes between "normal fires" such as a train passing a pressure wave and "real" explosions.

As soon as it registers a sudden temperature increase of over two hundred degrees within ten milliseconds it releases water barriers automatically.

Incidentally, the Tremonia mine has been fitted out with reinforced concrete bunkers full of the latest electronic equipment for registering the speed, strength and so on of blast waves.

Tests have also been run on man-sized dummies which show that even a fairly mild explosion can throw a man off his feet and badly injure him.

(Handelsblatt, 2 March 1977)

'Rhine Control' air traffic centre moves from Frankfurt to Karlsruhe

There there are twenty-four control strip printers which give detailed information on the situation in the air every ten seconds.

Data from computers is projected onto thirteen control display units with their thirteen pace-printers. And in cases of emergency if the computers are out of action teleprinters take over.

In addition, the centre is fitted out with cable television with six cameras and fifty receivers for several channels. It has its own telephone exchange and direct lines, and 25 UHF and thirteen VHF transmitters and receivers.

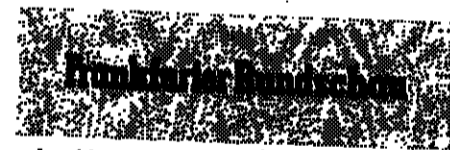
The thirty-five control desks each have synthetic display screens, strip printers and telephone.

Three IBM 370/158 computers control supplies of information on flight schedules, control strips and radar data. And there are also four Telefunken Periphery computers TR 86 and two MP-720 Hardware Plot Processors.

Should the electricity supply be cut off, work continues under battery-powered current and energy from three diesel generators.

Telephone and radio conversations as well as all information fed into and given out by computers are recorded and put on file. Data from five medium range radar units are digitalised, telephoned through to Karlsruhe and fed into the system.

From now on air traffic controllers



should have a much easier time keeping a check on aircraft in the area they are responsible for with the new "Karladap A" system. They cover an area from slightly south of the Aachen-Kassel line to the north, a line running from Lake Constance to the east of Stuttgart and to the north of Nuremberg.

Now, for example, they can switch on to different corridors at will, switching off the others that are of less importance temporarily. The varying shades of light and dark on the screens enable them to distinguish destinations that the system is covering from those it is not.

Aircraft whose radars are out of order or who are in difficulties are visible as a moving light on the screen. The identity and height of aircraft registered by the air control system are represented by moving tags.

Air control duties are divided into planning and executive functions. But although this halves the burden it causes other problems.

Coordination of work is much more complicated and air controllers cannot possibly keep an overall picture of the air control system because it has become so automated.

They cannot check up on all the data they need for every decision to make sure it is correct. This leaves the whole process wide open to technical breakdowns and possible computer errors — obvious security risks.

Although the volume of work made it extremely difficult for air traffic controllers to cope in the old centre in Frankfurt, it still remains to be seen whether the new one will make a great deal of difference.

Further difficulties may crop up because there are three absolutely separate personnel teams in the Karlsruhe centre. About 150 "Eurocontrol" employees are responsible for the technical and computer equipment.

A good two hundred-odd employees of the Federal Air Control Institute are responsible for civilian and military air traffic restricted to set lanes.

And military air traffic that is not obliged to stay in certain lanes is the responsibility of about one hundred Bundeswehr soldiers.

Time will tell whether the move to Karlsruhe has been worth while for Rhine Control and air traffic in general — perhaps it will only come into its own in 1979 when the Karladap system provides even more refined technical equipment.

But having authority in the centre divided three ways could cause problems and could represent a grave risk to safety. Experts have been pressing for control to be made the responsibility of only one organisation for some time now. It may turn out to be the only solution.

(Wolfgang Kassebohn, Frankfurter Rundschau, 26 February 1977)

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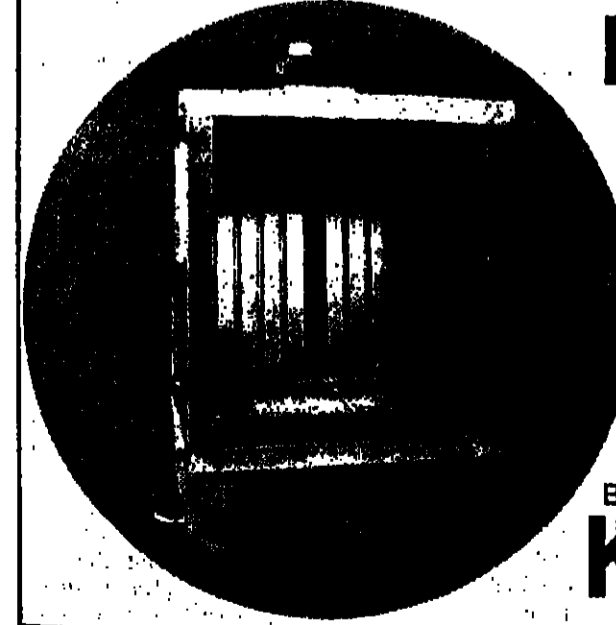
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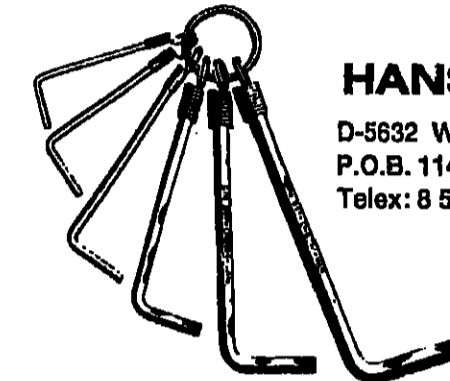
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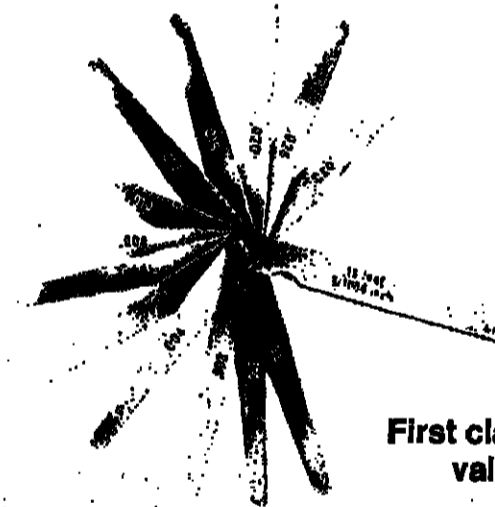


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